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FINAL CRISIS
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Final Examination

There's been a ***Crisis on Infinite Earths***. An ***Identity Crisis***. An ***Infinite Crisis***.

And it all culminates in 2008 in ***Final Crisis***, a seven-part series by *Grant Morrison & J.G. Jones* that, as it turns out, is what ***Countdown*** has been counting down to.

It's no surprise that *Grant Morrison*, one of DC's most popular writers and one of the four co-writers of the historic ***52*** series, should be tapped to write the seven-issue mega-event—but it *is* surprising that *J.G. Jones*, the acclaimed cover artist of ***52*** and the co-creator (with *Warren Ellis*) of ***Wanted***, has signed on to illustrate all seven issues. How'd the deal come about? "Just like the ***52*** covers, I got a call out of the blue from Dan DiDio," Jones told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Vaneta Rogers*. "I didn't know what I was going to do next. My contract was up. I was thinking about going to work for another company. And Dan brought me this huge, juicy piece of pie I couldn't say no to. I've never done a big event book. I haven't drawn a book since ***Wanted***, which I guess is three years now. So I thought I was ready."

The chance to work again with *Grant Morrison* was also an important contributing factor. "We worked together over at Marvel years ago on ***Marvel Boy***. And I loved that book so much and loved working with Grant. And he's also one of my favorite writers. I loved all of the ***Seven Soldiers*** stuff he's been doing. Pretty much all the books he's written in the last four or five years, I think are amazing. He's one of those writers where I try to pick up everything and read. So the chance to work with Grant was a selling point for me, more than anything else. I knew I'd get fun stuff to draw and an interesting story and a different point of view."

Just how far-reaching is ***Final Crisis?*** According to Morrison, "it will have Anthro the First Boy on the first page and Kamandi the Last Boy on the last page," and will involve most of the DCU in between.

"He's not kidding!" *Dan DiDio* added.

While the book won't debut until next spring, work is already underway. "DC actually sent me over to Scotland for the better part of a week," Jones said. "I stayed at Grant's for a few days and we just worked on character designs and the whole story. He laid the story out for me."

And what a big story it is! "It's seven issues, and they'll probably all be oversized issues, which is terrifying, but I've already started drawing. I'm about eight or nine pages in, so far. The first script's terrific. The story really hits the ground running."

Jones is aware that some fans might be a little concerned about yet another ***Crisis*** so soon after the wrap-up of the DCU-reshaping ***Infinite Crisis***. Jones assures readers that his is more than just a summertime "big event" placeholder. "I don't think I would draw this book if it was like that. I pick my projects very carefully. I only draw things I'm interested in. I only draw a book every few years. And I don't think I would be interested in doing just another giant 'every-superhero-gets-involved-makes-a-cameo-smackdown' kind of thing.

"And this is why having Grant write the book was so important, 'cause Grant has a real clear idea what he wants to do with this story. He told me that if they couldn't work out any potential continuity problems, he would just rather do it as an All-Star so he could tell this story. It's a story he wants to tell, and not company event. So we're just going to tell our story and see what happens."

Final Crisis debuts in May of 2008.

by Cliff Biggers

News Galore from the San Diego ComicCon

RASLing with Success

How does writer/artist *Jeff Smith* follow up a near-legendary independent comics creation like ***Bone?*** Well, that's a decision he's been ***RASL***-ing with for a while now...

Just what is ***RASL***, and how long has it been in development? "I first started playing around with the idea of doing a science fiction story around 2000. But this actual version of ***RASL*** just kind of came up recently," Smith told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Vaneta Rogers*. "And I didn't even really know what the character was going to look like until about two weeks ago, when I decided I wanted to do this six-page preview, and it just kind of ... came out. In one week, I had the whole thing done—the cover and everything.

"The story is about a thief -- an art thief -- who is known to the police as 'RASL,' because that's the tag he leaves whenever he steals a piece of art. He spray paints RASL on the wall in the spot where the art was. RASL has this ... how do I describe it? ... a full spectral immersion suit that he's invented that really, basically, is made of these giant jet engines that he straps to his shoulders and his knees that have magnets in them, and he can create thermal-magnetic disturbances through space-time and step between dimensions. So if you were a really rich person who wants to collect, say, a Mona Lisa, you could pay RASL, and he'll go to another dimension and steal the Mona Lisa for you!"

THESE GUYS USED TO TAKE ME MONTHS TO SET UP --
YEARS, SOMETIMES.
Picasso
WHEN THINGS GO WRONG --
WHICH SEEMS TO HAPPEN MORE AND MORE THESE DAYS --
IT MEANS I HAVE TO GET BACK TO THE PRESENT.
FAST.
BUT IT'S NOT AN ISSUE ANYMORE...

There's an occupational hazard to contend with, however. "The cover has this image of him face-down on the floor and screaming in pain, because what happens when you go through these dimensional barriers -- these light barriers between dimensions and universes -- is that apparently it hurts a lot. I mean, it hurts so badly that it takes him days to recover. The pain is so bad that, for days, he drinks and gambles and smokes and eats rich foods and has whores and all that. But to get back, he has to do the exact opposite. He has to completely clean his body and mind and thoughts and almost reach a zen, centered perfectness to get back through the light. But then he comes back out and is in pain again and it all starts over."

When Smith announced that he was debuting a really big project in San Diego, he meant it quite literally: the six-page preview of ***RASL*** that he displayed there was published in an enormous 11" X 17". Why did Smith go the jumbo-comics route? "I like to do new things. But it was also a reaction to moving into the book market where graphic novels have kind of become smaller to conform to book shelves and more standard book sizes. And as happy as I am to have that market opening up, I still want to do big comic book things. I want to serialize it. I want to go into a comic book store and see something that shines in black and white. But it was probably a reaction to, ironically, the success I've had in mainstream book stores."

Will the actual comic be produced in this monstrously large size? "I think so! The plan right now is to do four or five of these big books a year for the next couple of years, and then that should complete the story so that I'll have a 200 to 250-page graphic novel at the end, which will probably be a bit smaller than this—although not as small as ***Bone*** is now—but in color."

Black and white comics first, color graphic novel later on? "Right. So I want to return to the comic book direct market and serialize ***RASL*** in black and white with these large, oversized comic books, then at the end, collect it into a full

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

graphic novel that will get a much wider distribution."

Smith is eager to dive into a creator-owned project after spending the past couple of years working on ***Shazam and the Monster Society of Evil***. Part of the fun of doing the project through his own company is the freedom to let the story lead him where it will. "I kind of think I know what the ending is going to be. And I really hate to start a story without knowing what the ending is, but I'm a little less clear on this story than I was with ***Bone***. I knew pretty much where ***Bone*** was going to go, although not exactly. So maybe this is the right way to go. I should just dive in to The Drift and come out screaming."

Will ***Bone*** readers enjoy ***RASL***? "You know, I don't know. I wrote ***Bone*** just trying to entertain myself. It was the kind of comic I wanted to read ever since I was a kid. I just loved ***Uncle Scrooge*** and ***Heavy Metal*** comics, so that's where that mixture came from, but I also liked longer stories that start off like kids' adventure stories, like ***Huckleberry Finn*** or even ***Star Wars***, and then slowly the themes become more complex and a little more grown-up and dark. So I was only doing ***Bone*** for myself. And of course, when it was just in comic book stores, it was mostly adults reading it. I don't know how it got out to libraries and became a children's book. That's as big of a shock to me as anybody.

"But I'm taking the same approach with ***RASL***. This is obviously not for little children because I am going to have drinking and smoking and things that aren't for really young kids. But I don't think I'm going to go crazy with swear words. I don't think I'm going to end up doing anything like that. But yeah, I'm just doing it for myself. This one's a little more grown up, a little more James Bond than the Bugs Bunny stuff I did with ***Bone***. I don't know why they *wouldn't* like it.

The first issue of ***RASL*** is tentatively slated for January 2008 release from Smith's own Cartoon Books.

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Jack Kirby Presents...

In the formative days of Image Comics, the seven founding members briefly toyed with the idea of putting the tag-line "Jack Kirby Presents" on all their books. Ultimately, they decided against it...

...But it's funny how ideas resurface!

While Image won't be putting "Jack Kirby Presents" on *all* their books, they will be using that tag-line on *some* of their books in 2008. Image and the Kirby Estate have entered into an agreement to produce new series based on two of Kirby's final creator-owned properties, originally published by Pacific Comics in the early 1980s. Also in the pipeline is a collection of completed-but-unpublished ***Silver Star*** mini-series by *Kurt Busiek*, along with Busiek and *Neil Vokes*' *Teen Agents* mini-series.

Image publisher *Erik Larsen* told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Benjamin Ong Pang Kean* how the deal came about. "Ever since Topps took on the Kirbyverse and fumbled the ball, I've wanted a crack at these characters. I've worked on Jack's characters in the past, and I've made it no secret that I'm a huge fan. And I still want to work with Jack's characters, but I feel that as the publisher of Image, I really shouldn't be doing work at any other comic book company. So rather than have me go to other companies to do Kirby characters —we moved a few mountains to have Kirby characters come to Image. We had some conversations with *Lisa Kirby*. I laid out what I wanted to do and then we hammered out the details."

"This all really started last year, with our discussions about the ***Captain Victory*** and ***Silver Star*** collections," Image executive editor *Eric Stephenson* explained. "I think both Erik and I were already interested in doing new series with those characters, but we wanted to show the Kirby Estate what we could do with the reprint collections first—we kind of wanted to prove we had what it takes. Once we got into ***Silver Star***, though, our enthusiasm for putting together new series really jumped to the next level. We had such a blast working on ***Silver Star***—and there's just so much potential to continue this stuff—it seemed like the logical next step."

Image's new Kirby line will begin with two books. "***Silver Star*** covers Earth, ***Captain Victory*** covers all space, and both will be packed with awesome Kirby characters and concepts many of which have only appeared as sketches," Larsen said. "The idea is to introduce these characters one after another the same way that characters were introduced in other Kirby books over the years.

"What I'd like to do is feature Jack's original drawings and whatever notes he might have had in the back of the books to give readers insight into what Jack drew and what we had to work with. In the ***Silver Star*** book, for example, there are a few drawings that feature characters that didn't make it into the book. In Jack's original ***Silver Star*** pitch, there was a whole gang of guys that wound up on the cutting room floor and Jack redesigned his 'Angel of Death' character so much that he doesn't look like the same guy. That original design was cool as all hell, and I want to put that design to good use. Jack has numerous cosmic characters that would fit right in to ***Captain Victory*** and Earthbound characters would be right at home in ***Silver Star*** and we can mix and match as well, having cosmic characters appearing in ***Silver Star*** and non-cosmic characters popping into ***Captain Victory***."

Larsen explained that both series will be "continuations of what has gone before and in both cases, everything you need to know will be in print well before the books start up. And there will be a lot of effort made to make these new-reader friendly. Even if you've never read these books you shouldn't be remotely confused or lost."

"The collections for both books will be available by the time these series kick off, so anyone unfamiliar with either character will definitely have the opportunity to check that material out," Stephenson added. "There were only six issues of ***Silver Star*** and fourteen of ***Captain Victory***, though, so it wouldn't be too difficult for someone to just dive in to the new books."

Larsen will be "writing and pencilling both books to begin with. Eric's working with me on ***Captain Victory*** as a co-writer, but I'll be flying solo on ***Silver Star***."

Is there any chance that these books will cross over with other Image titles? "I'd rather that come later, really," Larsen said. "I'd prefer to have these characters be more grounded first. The Fantastic Four and Spider-Man didn't start off as part of some big crossover—people got to know those characters first."

"I think there's a real benefit in the fact that they're just two books," Stephenson said. "And apart from the fact the characters were created by *Jack Kirby*, there's not really a connection between the two. They both take place within the same 'universe,' but if you want to buy one and not the other, you're not missing out on anything."

" Which is not to say that crossovers can't happen," Larsen added. "I'd like to have Silver Star drop by in ***Savage Dragon***, and these characters will be part of the overall Image Universe, but I think it would be a mistake to immediately have them be forced into some unwieldy company-wide crossover right out of the gate."

Why wold today's readers be interested in these final Kirby creations? "For the same reason people get fired up about the X-Men, Fantastic Four and Spider-Man!" Larsen said. "Why do people care about Batman and Superman nearly seventy years after they were introduced? A good character is a good character—and these are *awesome* characters. And there's going to be a real element of the unknown to these books that longer-running titles don't have. There's a lot more potential for the new and the unexpected when you're only working with a few issues' worth of continuity. And Jack creates enduring, iconic characters. This isn't Jack's version of Batman or Jack's take on Spider-Man--these are rock-solid original concepts that stand on their own."

Look for ***Silver Star*** and ***Captain Victory*** in 2008.

History Sometimes Forgets

Sure, almost every comics reader knows about some of Marvel's superstars who debuted during the Golden Age of Timely Comics—Sub-Mariner, Human Torch, Captain America. But what about those who didn't quite make the cut?

You might have assumed that those hero also-rans simply faded away into obscurity... but if you thought that, you hadn't reckoned on *J. Michael Straczynski & Chris Weston*.

The Twelve, a twelve-issue miniseries, brings back twelve all-but-forgotten heroes from the early days of Marvel, reviving and rejuvenating them for the 21st Century. ***The Twelve*** reaches back into the early years of Marvel Comics—so early, in fact, that it was before there *was* a Marvel Comics. Marvel Comics as we know it today was previously the company called Atlas Comics and before that, Timely Publication. It was during these formulative years that the "mighty Marvel Family" as we know it first began. While some heroes reached to super stardom, these lesser-known heroes were seemingly lost to the ages and faded to the background of Marvel lore.

"Having had a great time bringing back a number of classic characters in Supreme Power, I thought I'd go deeper and farther back to see what kind of trouble I could get into," Straczynski told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Chris Arrant*. "I was also curious to see what characters from the time of World War II might have to say about the current state of affairs. Steve Rogers as Captain America came from the 40s to the 1960s and the culture shock was considerable; how much more then the shock of going from the 40s to 2007? I wanted to explore their reactions to us, and our reactions to them...what was good about the WW2 period that we lost, and what was not so good about it that we've eliminated in all but them."

The disappearance of The Twelve from Marvel history for so long is explained that these heroes were kidnapped during the final days of World War II by German Nazis. "None of these characters has been seen since the fall of Berlin, so I picked that as the point to say that nobody's seen them

because they were grabbed by the Nazis and put into cryonic suspension," explained Straczynski. "[The Nazis'] theory was that they were getting beaten by the Allies because they didn't have enough super-powered guys, so these twelve were taken randomly for the purpose of studying their powers and making the Germans the true master race when the Third Reich v2.0 came along. Needless to say the Allies messed up that plan, so the twelve remained in stasis until a construction project in Berlin accidentally stumbled upon their frozen tubes."

Straczynski already had a passing knowledge of these pre-Marvel heroes before the story began, but he admitted that he didn't want to "dig too deep because I wasn't sure which characters would or wouldn't be available legally." The Twelve editor and resident Marvel historian Tom Brevoort took on the task of digging through the archives, and in doing so came back with a list of characters that were clearly owned by Marvel. It was from those that Straczynski chose those twelve who could give him the widest range of powers, backgrounds, origins and purposes and "thus the most room for conflict."

"To a certain degree, the question is what constitutes a hero today, yesterday, and what's the point of intersection between those two," Straczynski said. "Where does social tolerance become license and where does preference become prejudice? Was the past all it was cracked up to be, and is the future what it was meant to be...and if not, why?"

Chris Weston explained how he became involved in the project. "*Aubrey Sitterson* and *Tom Brevoort*, my editors on ***Fantastic Four: First Family***, thought my style of art would suit this story's more downbeat and character-driven take on the Super-Hero genre," explained Weston, who has already penciled six issues. "I try to produce art that is a little bit more illustrative rather than graphic in nature, and lean towards realism rather than caricature. The Twelve needed that approach, being a realistic psycho-drama about people who just happen to be defrosted crime-fighters from the 1940's."

"Chris has a great approach that fits in perfectly with the book, keeping it feeling of its original time but current as well" said Straczynski, adding "...and Chris can make retro cool."

Comic-Con Newsbits: Marvel

•Marvel announced the four creative teams for the post-***One More Day*** thrice-monthly ***Amazing Spider-Man*** run: *Dan Slott & Steve McNiven, Marc Guggenheim & Salvador Larroca, Bob Gale & Phil Jimenez*, and *Zeb Wells & Chris Bachalo*. "The writers all handle a complete arc that will roll right into the next," editor *Steve Wacker* said. "Artists will also be assigned for complete arcs, but I'll be rotating the order so that it's not always the same writer/artist team."

Wacker explained how the creators were chosen. As far as writers are concerned, "What I think you need in this situation is fearless writers, writers unafraid to share ideas and willing to work harder than usual for the same pay rate," Wacker said. "This is not an easy gig. It's grueling, vicious, and relentless work that requires every writer to invest themselves into scripts that may end up not having their name on them. In these four writers, I think we have that team. The fact that between the four of them, they've read every Spider-Man talent ever printed is icing on the cake..."

Regarding artists, "We all knew we only had one chance to do this right. There inevitably are going to be people who don't think this can work or even rooting for failure. So it was clear that the best way for Marvel to show we were serious about this launch and dedicated to it hitting hard was to put some of Marvel's best artists on the book. Thanks to Talent Manager *Chris Allo* and managing editor *David Bogart*, schedules were tweaked and we were able to fill our artistic ranks quickly and strongly. Each artist brings a very different style, but I believe the strength of Spider-Man is that he's able to be successfully interpreted in so many different ways. These artists are not only unarguably commercial, but they each bring a different look to the stories and illustrate the pretty wide spectrum this title will live in."

The new teams kick off their run beginning with ***Amazing Spider-Man #546***, the first post-***One More Day*** issue.

•***Iron Man*** movie director *Jon Favreau* is joining forces with CGI artist *Adi Granov* for ***Iron Man: Viva Las Vegas***, a four-issue miniseries slated to debut at about the same time as the film. ""Jon and Adi were both working on the movie in their respective capacities, and at some point Adi suggested that it might be a cool idea for them to do an actual Iron Man comic book story together as well," Marvel editor *Tom Brevoort* said.

•Marvel's *Jim McCann* confirmed that there are plans in the works for solo series starring members of the X-Men beyond Wolverine, who stars in two monthly solo books currently... but he didn't identify which mutants might get the solo treatment, or when.

•Major changes are coming to Marvel's Ultimate Universe in 2008, some of which are set into motion in the current ***Ultimate Power*** series. "What we wanted to do is finish with a 'wow' finish' and that the last three issues will be especially significant to what they'll be talking about later at the panel," writer *Jeph Loeb* seed. "At the end of issue #9, there will be changes to the Ultimate Universe and the Squadron Supreme Universe from this day forward."

•*Jeph Loeb & Joe Madureira's* ***Ultimates 3*** is slated to debut in December.

•*Butch Guice, Terry Moore, Marc Guggenheim, & Phil Jimenez* have signed exclusives with Marvel.

•*Brian Reed & Lee Weeks* will produce a new ***Captain Marvel*** miniseries that picks up after the events of ***Civil War: The Return***. Reed points out that this *isn't* just another superhero resurrection. "Ahhh, there's the thing that I think makes ***Captain Marvel*** interesting in today's Marvel Universe -- this *isn't* a resurrection. He is most certainly not 'back from the dead.' What we're seeing is Captain Marvel propelled into the future and witnessing what the world will become after he is gone. Captain Marvel still dies of cancer, lying there in his bed on Titan, with all the other heroes gathered around him. And he stays good and dead after that."

•***Iron Man*** writers *Daniel & Charles Knauf* have been tapped to write a new ongoing ***Eternals*** series that will pick up where *Neil Gaiman & John Romita Jr.'s* miniseries left off. "The series will focus mainly on Ikarus, Sersi, Makaari and Thena," editor *Mark Paniccia* said. "The Knaufs will be exploring the cosmology of the Eternals, the Celestials and beyond."

•Once *Joss Whedon & John Cassaday* wrap up their ***Astonishing X-Men*** run, *Warren Ellis & Simone Bianchi* are slated to take over the title; when their run begins,t he title will change to ***Astonishing X-Men: Second Stage***. What led Ellis to take on an X-Men title? "I worked in the X-Office back in the 90s, but they never let me near their big toys in case I broke them or put them in my mouth or something. So when this came up, and when the degree of creative freedom that comes with it became clear, I thought, why the hell not? I mean, you never get to make your 'stamp' on these things, because the

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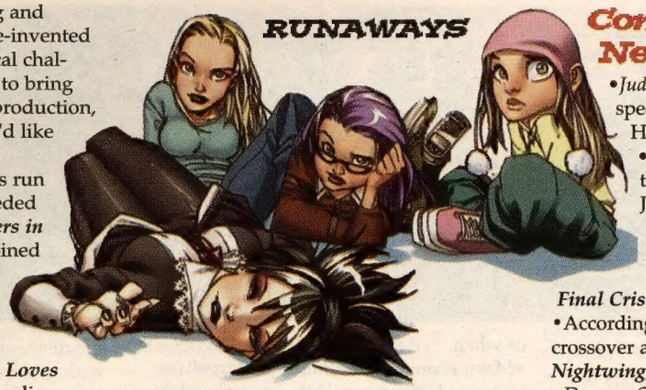
franchise needs to keep running and everything gets dug over and re-invented in the end. But I like the technical challenge in these commercial gigs: to bring the property into the era of its production, as it were, and to write stories I'd like to read."

•After *Joss Whedon* wraps up his run on ***Runaways***, he will be succeeded by writer *Terry Moore* of ***Strangers in Paradise*** fame. Moore will be joined by artist *Humberto Ramos* beginning with ***Runaways #31***. This marks Moore's second series for Marvel, following the already-announced ***Spider-Man Loves Mary Jane***. One of the most appealing aspects of the series, Moore said, is that "it's a set-up that allows the writer to go in and try so many different experiences for the characters. Every day is different for them. You can come back to the book time and time again and find a reliable setting, but the characters are having to face new challenges every single day—partly because of their age, partly because of

their unique skill set, and partly because of where they live in L.A."

•*Jeph Loeb & David Finch* are working on a new crossover story, ***Ultimatum***, that will pick up after the end of the ***Ultimates 3*** series. This six-part series will appear in ***Ultimate Fantastic Four*** and ***Ultimate X-Men*** for three months beginning in May. "The idea is that things will change, forever," said Loeb. "The nice thing about the Ultimate Universe is that you can do that and make it stick." People can die and stay dead, he explained, or teams can break up forever and never reunite. "In the Ultimate Universe, you can expect the unexpected, and that's what we want to get back to."

The seeds for ***Ultimatum*** are already being planted, according to Loeb. "It starts with the end of ***Ultimate Power #s 7-9***... From there, going to ***Ultimate Origin*** by Bendis and *Butch Guice* will lay all the foundation for what is to come. You see, you've got to know how it all started... so you can understand why it all has to end... From ***Ultimate Origin***, we lay the track into ***Ultimates 3*** where *Joe Madureira* and I are telling the story that will reveal who and why someone is going to make 'The Ultimatum' and we'll see exactly how dangerous that's going to be. People are starting to get a sneak peek at what Joe Mad has been working on and just prepare yourselves. It's so freakin' cool... It all



builds to The ***Ultimate Fantastic Four*** crossing over with ***Ultimate X-Men***... And then—well, who knows if there's going to be *anything* after that!"

•Both ***Ultimate Wolverine Vs. Hulk*** and the next ***Ultimate Iron Man*** miniseries look on target to appear in 2008.

•***Ultimate Origins*** will be at least six issues long, and possibly longer.

Waid Goes Boom!

Mark Waid has been involved in high profile projects for Marvel, DC, and CrossGen during his storied career; he was a core member of the *52* creative team, helping to reinvent the DCU. So it's no surprise he's been offered a job as editor-in-chief...

...But it may be a surprise to learn that the job he's been offered is at Boom! Studios—and he's accepted, now that his exclusive DC contract has wrapped up.

According to publisher *Ross Richie*, Waid will "oversee the creation of all the Boom! titles, work with established and non-established talent on new properties designed to ignite the medium's boundaries, and shepherd Boom exciting slate of licensed properties."

"Boom! Studios is the next generation comic book company. They are doing innovative work of astounding quality," Waid says. "Co-owners *Ross Richie* and *Andy Cosby* have an incredible vision for the future of the industry and the company, and they approached me to partner with them to realize that vision. 'Here's a comic-book company,' says Ross. 'Go run it, and run it your way.' It's an unbelievable offer." "Mark is as close to the Leonardo DaVinci of comics as you can get," Richie said. "There's *nothing* he hasn't done. The man can write. The man can edit. He designs characters, he can do production and layout, I've gotten files on his books back with the colors Photoshop-corrected by the man himself. He knows comics inside and out. And he is just an honest-to-goodness genuine human being who loves this medium and got taught all the right lessons by the heroes he grew up reading. His standing in the comics community speaks for itself. Mark is at the top of his game and we look forward to him taking Boom! into the stratosphere."

Waid's involvement with Boom! goes back a while. "Back when Boom! started as four guys in a barn, they corralled me into writing for their first comic, ***Zombie Tales*** and the experience was terrific. They earned my trust, so I brought them my new creation, ***Potter's Field*** with artist *Paul Azaceta*. That led to the E-I-C offer."

Comic-Con Newsbits: DC

•*Judd Winick* is writing a ***Titans East*** special for DC, featuring Cyborg, Hawk & Dove, and others.

•*Dan Jurgens* takes readers back to the Tangent Universe with January's ***Tangent: Global Degree***, which features both DCU and Tangent characters—and yes, it *will* have something to do with ***Final Crisis***.

•According to *Paul Dini*, there's a major crossover arc involving ***Batman, Detective, Nightwing***, and ***Robin***.

•*Darwyn Cooke & J. Bone* are leaving ***The Spirit*** as of the 12th issue; no word on who'll be taking their place on the series, which will continue after their departure.

•The previously-announced ***All-Star Batgirl*** is on hold for now; no idea when it might make its DC debut.

•***House of Mystery*** will return as a series co-written by *Matthew Sturges & Bill Willingham* with art by *Luca Rossi*. So what's the premise, and how does the series work? "The larger story is about the people who live in the House of Mystery which has disappeared from Cain's realm. He comes out one morning to find that the house—his house has just vanished," Sturges explained. "Cut forward seven years, and we find that there are other people living there, and they've turned it into a bar and grill. Because they live in a magical house and have no need for money, you get your food and drink in exchange for telling a story. So, people come in, they tell their story - and that's the story. It will be drawn by somebody other than our primary artist and then we come back to the main story after the traveler's story is done."

•***All-Star Wonder Woman*** won't be scheduled until writer/artist *Adam Hughes* has finished his six-issue run to ensure that the book can appear on a monthly schedule.

•*Bill Willingham* is working on ***Salvation Run***, a project involving DC villains. Willingham said it involves authorities being upset with villains continually escaping from Arkham Asylum and the like. The book deals with the solution being proposed of giving the villains "a world of their own," and the inherent problems therein.

•*Bob Wayne* confirmed that the long-awaited *Alan Moore & Kevin O'Neill* graphic novel ***The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: The Black Dossier*** is indeed on track for release this year.

•*Matt Wagner* is writing a new ***Madame Xanadu*** ongoing series for Vertigo; *Amy Hadley* will supply the art. The series will reveal the true origin of the enigmatic sorceress, as well as exploring her complex relationship with the Phantom Stranger. Will the series have any links to ***Madame Xanadu's*** prior DC appearances? "Yeah, very much so," Wagner said. "It's a Vertigo book, so it's a Vertigo sort of vibe, but she was a DCU character. It really is a balancing act there, which is something I always like to do. I've always been half in the mainstream and half in the indy world."

•DC has unveiled several of the projects in development for the Minx imprint in 2008. They include ***Token*** by *Alisa Kwitney & Joelle Jones* (a story of teenage romance among social misfits in the 1980s); ***Emiko Superstar*** by *Mariko Tamaki & Steve Rolston* (about a girl who turns her boss's diary into the inspiration for her performance art); ***Burnout*** by *Rebecca Donner & Inaki Miranda* (sister discovers that her soon-to-be-stepbrother is an eco-terrorist); ***The New York Four*** by *Brian Wood & Ryan Kelly* (social and academic pressures threaten the friendships of four college freshmen); ***All Nighter*** by *David Hahn* (an art student and part-time cat burglar turns detective when a friend disappears); ***Poseur*** by *Deborah Vankin & Rick Mays* (a "house guest for hire" gets caught up in a kidnapping plot gone wrong); and ***Clubbing in Tokyo*** by *Andi Watson & Josh Howard* (a continuation of the story of goth girl Lottie Brooks, who starred in the recently-released ***Clubbing***). In addition, *Cecil Castellucci & Jim Rugg* are working on ***Janes in Love***, a sequel to their kickoff Minx work ***The Plain Janes***.

•WildStorm/DC has landed the rights to the ***Heroes*** graphic novel. The project will collect the comics material that has appeared on NBC's ***Heroes*** website; the 43 different stories presented online thus far include material by *Michael Turner, Marcus To, Mitch Gunnell, & Phil Jimenez*. The book will feature new covers by *Alex Ross* and *Jim Lee*. The book will also include Tim Sale's artwork, whose works were used in the show as Isaac Mendez's prophecies. Look for the collected volume in late fall.

•*Josh Dysart* is working on an updated ***Unknown Soldier*** series for Vertigo. "Ours is a totally new Unknown Soldier from a different part of the world. He has new concerns and new reasons to fight-so, some surface things are very different from the original. However, I think the heart and soul of our book is similar to the original in a lot of ways. Our Unknown Soldier is a faceless soldier for his people. He is a patriot in a time of war, driven by a sense of personal justice. In the final issue of the original ***Unknown Soldier***, he kills Hitler. Our Unknown Soldier has his own Hitler (a real life war criminal) to go after.

"When we are not being true in spirit to the original we, at the very least, try to have some sort of 'conversation' with the previous incarnation. For instance, this idea that, 'one guy can affect the outcome of a whole war! One guy in the right place, at the right time…' which was at the pith of the original book, is something our Unknown Soldier believes, but what's the truth of that? At what cost does a person fight in a war? At what cost do they *not* fight in a war? Violence is a very tricky tool. It can liberate, but it can also perpetuate. Hopefully we're creating a series that deals with that sort of sticky wicket in a way that doesn't bog down the excitement of a war book."

•*Jamie Delano* returns to John Constantine next year, uniting with artist *Jock* for ***Hellblazer: Pandemonium***, an original graphic novel that will commemorate the series' twentieth anniversary. The story find Constantine involved in a case of demonically possessed Iraqi insurgents.

Comic-Con Newsbits: Image

•Robert Kirkman is writing a new series, ***Haunt***, to be published through *Todd McFarlane* and Image. McFarlane will supply covers for the series; while he won't be doing any interior art, he reported that he would "have a creative control all the way through it." The project grew out of Kirkman's request at Comic-Con 2006 that McFarlane take a more active role in comics after letting his comics work get sidelined in lieu of McFarlane's other business interests.

•*Steve Niles* is writing a horror oneshot entitled ***Frank Frazetta's Dracula Meets the Wolfman***, inspired by one of Frazetta's legendary paintings depicting the two horror icons in battle with one another. *Jay Fotos*, the driving force behind Image's ***Frank Frazetta's Death Dealer*** series, is the mastermind behind this book as well—and it's one of several Frazetta-painting-inspired projects that are in the works. Also in development is ***Frank Frazetta's Creatures***, written by *Rick Remender*, which features (along with the monsters) Teddy Roosevelt as a paranormal explorer. Fotos described this new line as "the Time-Life Library of Frazetta comics."

•Writer *Brian Reed* will produce his first Image title in November; ***The Circle*** will be illustrated by *Ian Hosfeld*. Reed described the book as "espionage in the vein of the classic TV series ***Mission: Impossible*** or ***The Man From U.N.C.L.E.***, and somewhat inspired by the fantastic long running comic strip ***Modesty Blaise***. ***The Circle*** is a group of freedom fighters that first formed amidst the horrible civil wars in the Baltics during the late 1990's, and today operate as guns for hire. They are also fugitives, on the run both from the totalitarian government that won control of their homeland, and the CIA, who helped put that government in power as a means of stabilizing the region."

Dysart's Seeing Green(dale)

Comics frequently draw their inspirations from other media—novels, films, radio programs, and television shows. But it's not too often that a comic book project is inspired by a CD!

Greendale, *Josh Dysart's* upcoming graphic novel, is a collaborative effort with acclaimed singer-songwriter *Neil Young*, who produced a 2003 thematic CD and an accompanying film of the same name. Dysart explained that the graphic novel is set in the same fictional town created by Young for the CD and film. "It takes place on the eve of the invasion of Iraq and it's the story of a young high school girl on the road to finding her inner-activist in a small fictional town set in northern California," Dysart told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Steve Ekstrom*. "Two truly incredible things are about to take place in this town: one is that a visitor of supernatural proportions is arriving to shake things down to their very foundations. The other is that our protagonist is about to discover something miraculous about herself and all the women in her family."

Rather than just licensing out the use of his fictional milieu, Young is "directly involved" in the graphic novel. "I pitched him my take. We got notes back from him. I even met his whole family-his son and daughter, his wife, and of course, the man himself. (Crosby, Stills and Nash were also there, but now I'm just namedropping… heh). He's a wonderful, wonderful person-when I met him it felt like he'd been in my life forever; which, through his music, I guess he has."

Will characters from Young's album and film be featured in the graphic novel? "Yup, characters and situations but there's a storytelling element in the Greendale art book that didn't really make it into the film or the album. So, that's what I've focused on for the graphic novel. We're not just stringing the stories from the album together. It will be very different from the previous incarnations of the material. A little bit traditional Vertigo, a little bit Dysart, a whole lot ***Greendale***."

Look for the graphic novel in 2008.

Comic-Con Newsbits: Dark Horse

•*Rick Remender & Mat Broome* are working on the superhero series ***End League*** for Dark Horse. "A merging of ***The Lord of the Rings*** and ***The End League*** follows a cast of the last remaining supermen and women, all familiar archetypes, as they embark on a desperate and perilous journey through a world dominated by evil, in hopes of locating the one remaining artifact that can save their world — the Hammer of Thor," Remender said.

"***The End League*** is a dream project to work on where Rick and I can go balls to the wall and do everything we want with the archetypes we love. I think every creator out there wants to work on a title where you make the rules and decided who lives and who dies, and ***The End League*** is that book. Readers will take a perilous journey with the characters with the highest stakes. The idea is to make a band of immediately familiar characters who the readers can truly be invested in," Broome added.

•***Creepy*** and ***Eerie***, the classic 1960s-1970s horror magazines produced by *Jim Warren*, return in a line of archive editions as well as new volumes. "Both ***Creepy*** and ***Eerie*** are fondly remembered by comics fans as representing the best of science fiction and horror, and Dark Horse is proud and excited to relaunch these classic titles," said Dark Horse publisher *Mike Richardson*. Look for hardcover archive editions reprinting the original issues (including material by *Al Williamson, Wally Wood, Steve Ditko, Gene Colan, Frank Frazetta, Neal Adams*, and others) in the fall, with the new issues debuting next spring.

•***Indiana Jones*** is exploring the mysterious realm of comic books again in 2008, with assistance from Dark Horse. The ***Indy*** publishing plan involves Omnibus editions reprinting prior Dark Horse ***Indiana Jones*** projects; ***Indiana Jones Adventures*** featuring original all-ages material in a digest-sized format; Omnibus editions reprinting the hard-to-find Marvel ***Indiana Jones*** run; and (in conjunction with the spring 2008 debut of the next film) a new ***Indiana Jones*** comics series.

•*Andy Breckman*, creator of USA Network's hit series ***Monk***, teams with artist *Peter Gross* for ***Long Lost***, a suspense-mystery series. The series begins when a mother is confronted by a teenage boy who claims to be her son, who was kidnapped when he was a baby. Her joy is tempered by skepticism as she begins to wonder if the boy's story is the truth. Breckman brought the series to comics because "it was too dark—too twisted—for TV. And way too intense—too claustrophobic—for the big screen. Then I met the amazing *Peter Gross* and his blessed-by-God right hand. He sent me a few rough pages, and that was it. ***Long Lost*** was home. I realized it was always meant to be a graphic novel, and Peter was always meant to bring it to life." The first issue is slated for early 2008 release.

•*Satsuki Igarashi, Mokona, Tsubaki Nekoi, & Ageha Ohkawa*—the manga-ka all-female supergroup known to their millions of fans worldwide as CLAMP—will produce an original series for Dark Horse in 2008. It won't be a manga, though: instead, the creators are terming the 80-page digest-sized publication a "mangette." According to CLAMP, ""Mangettes are a completely brand new experience for us, too, and we're really happy to be working on this. And we're really looking forward to the day when we can bring you this new story from CLAMP, and the day when we can meet our fans face-to-face to hear what you think about mangettes!"

Comic-Con Newsbits: Other Publishers

•Devil's Due will premiere their paranormal-action-adventure series ***Spooks*** in early 2007. The four-part series by *Ryan Schifrin, Daniel Alter, R.A. Salvatore, & Larry Hama* focuses on a secret branch of the government that protects humanity from supernatural menaces. "This is epic fantasy, but instead of castles and dragons it's Halloween iconography—vampires, witches, werewolves and the Headless Horseman," said Schifrin "I think of it as ***GI JOE*** meets ***Monster Squad***, but with massive ***Lord of the Rings*** style battles."

•TokyoPop and CBS Consumer Products will unite for a second volume of original ***Star Trek*** manga.Entitled ***Star Trek: The Manga—Kakan Ni Shinkou***, the volume will feature short tales produced by *Diane*

Best Writer - *Ed Brubaker*, ***Captain America, Daredevil*** (Marvel); ***Criminal*** (Marvel/Icon)

•Best Writer/Artist - *Paul Pope*, ***Batman: Year 100*** (DC)

•Best Writer/Artist (Humor) - *Tony Millionaire*, ***Billy Hazelnuts*** (Fantagraphics); ***Sock Monkey: The Inches Incident*** (Dark Horse)

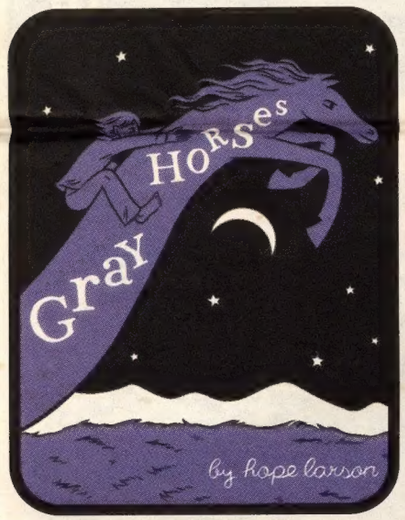
•Best Penciller/Inker or Penciller/Inker Team - *Mark Buckingham/Steve Leialoha*, ***Fables*** (Vertigo/DC)

•Best Painter/Multimedia Artist (interior art) - *Jill Thompson*, "A Dog and His Boy" in ***The Dark Horse Book of Monsters***; "Love Triangle" in ***Sexy Chix*** (Dark Horse); "Fair Division," in ***Fables: 1001 Nights of Snowfall*** (Vertigo/DC)

•Best Cover Artist - *James Jean*, ***Fables***, ***Jack of Fables***, ***Fables: 1001 Nights of Snowfall*** (Vertigo/DC)

•Best Coloring -*Dave Stewart*, ***BPRD***, ***Conan***, ***The Escapists***, ***Hellboy*** (Dark Horse); ***Action Comics***, ***Batman/The Spirit***, ***Superman*** (DC)

•Best Lettering- *Todd Klein*, ***Fables***, ***Jack of Fables***, ***Fables: 1001 Nights of Snowfall***; ***Pride of Baghdad***, ***Testament*** (Vertigo/DC); ***Fantastic Four: 1602***, ***Eternals*** (Marvel); ***Lost Girls*** (Top Shelf)



•Special Recognition - *Hope Larson*, ***Gray Horses*** (Oni)

•Best Comics-Related Periodical - ***Alter Ego***, edited by *Roy Thomas* (TwoMorrows)

•Best Comics-Related Book - ***The Art of Brian Bolland***, edited by *Joe Pruett* (Desperado)

•Best Publication Design - ***Absolute DC: The New Frontier***, designed by *Darwyn Cooke* (DC)

•Hall of Fame - *Robert Kanigher* (Judges' Choice), *Ogden Whitney* (Judges' Choice, *Ross Andru & Mike Esposito*, *Dick Ayers*, *Wayne Boring*, *Joe Orlando*

Other Awards:

•Bill Finger Award for Excellence in Comics Writing: *Gardner Fox*, *George Gladir*

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WINTER 2007

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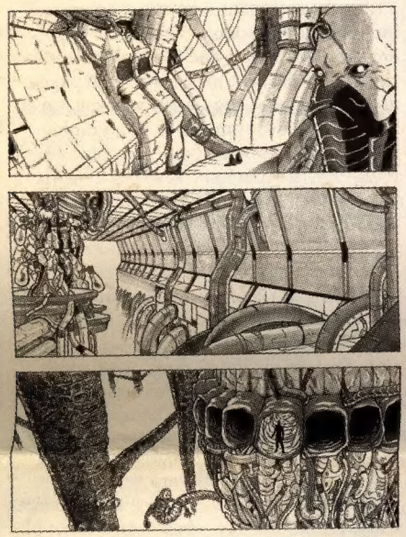
Duane, Wil Wheaton, EJ Su, and others. In this volume's short tales, Kirk is put on trial for crimes he has yet to discover... Uhura demonstrates the true power of communication... Bones gets to the core of Vulcan emotion... Scotty has to extract dilithium crystals from a mine in the middle of a war zone... and an alien delegation uses the Enterprise as a vessel of deception!

"The first volume cracked the surface of what the marriage of manga and Star Trek could be," editor *Luis Reyes said.* "With this second volume we hope to dig deeper into what the original Star Trek series was all about, and we are excited to enlist Wil Wheaton and Diane Duane in that pursuit. As in the first volume, Kakan Ni Shinkou will adhere to Gene Roddenberry's philosophy of using the Star Trek universe as a way to explore our own humanity. An ambitious goal and one I hope we serve well in this book."



•And speaking of ***Star Trek***... IDW unveils their next ***Star Trek*** miniseries in January 2008. ***Star Trek: The Next Generation—Intelligence Gathering,*** produced by *Scott & David Tipton* and *David Messina* (the creative team behind ***Klingons: Blood Will Tell***). The series will, according to the Tiptons, "focus on the relationships between the characters that meant the most to us, and explore them though a series of done-in-one adventures that just may be leading somewhere entirely unexpected."

•First Second Books will collect *Paul Pope's* ***THB*** in one massive volume in 2009. ***Total THB,*** a massive four-volume full-color set, will run over 1200 pages; an oversized deluxe black and white edition is planned as well. Both books will include the never-before-seen final chapter of the story.

•***Doctor Who*** will return to American comics in a new series from IDW, based on the tenth Doctor, with stories by TV show script writer *Gary Russell* and art by *Nick Roche.*

•Writer *Brian Lynch* has been tapped by creator *Joss Whedon* to write ***Angel: After the Fall,*** the at-least-twelve-part series that will basically serve as "season six" of the five-season ***Buffy*** spinoff. Lynch said that, after his ***Spike: Asylum*** series premiered, IDW received " a very complimentary, somewhat life-changing e-mail from Mr. Whedon saying that he enjoyed ***Spike: Asylum*** and thinks that maybe the time is right to officially continue the Angel story and that I would be the guy to write it. We traded e-mails back and forth for a while and eventually met up for breakfast and he told me all his ideas and I told him the one I had ('Angel should fight monsters!') and then I put some of the ideas to paper, slowly the story's spine started to form, I'd send him an e-mail with more ideas, he'd send an e-mail back with even better ideas, it slowly but surely became the greatest story of all time and he was all 'this is neat' and here we are."***Angel: After the Fall*** will be illustrated by *Franco Urru.*

Next year, prior to the debut of ***Total THB,*** the company will offer an original *Paul Pope* two-volume graphic novel series for young readers, ***Battling Boy,*** which introduces a youthful hero who faces off against various demons in the city of Monstropolis. "I'm excited about the alliance ***THB*** will have with First Second," Pope said. "*Mark Siegel* is an old-time fan of the series, and together we will finally be getting the entire ***THB*** story out there in full color and in a series of beautifully designed trade paperbacks, falling right on the heels of ***Battling Boy.***"

•IDW is working on ***Cory Doctorow's Futuristic Tales of the Here and Now,*** a six-issue series featuring adaptations of Doctorow's stories.

•Boom! Studios has acquired a license to produce comics and graphic novels based on Epic Games" ***Gears of War*** videogame.

•Porn performer *Jenna Jameson* is working on a comic... and the publisher will be Virgin Comics. Insert your joke here.

2007 Eisner Award Winners

Professionals from across the industry have spoken and the 2007 Eisner Award Winners have been selected. This year's biggest winner was DC, with more than a dozen winners; *Joe Pruett's* Desperado made the best new publisher showing for a with two wins. The full list of winners follows:

•Best Short Story - "A Frog's Eye View," by *Bill Willingham & James Jean,* in ***Fables: 1001 Nights of Snowfall*** (Vertigo/DC)

•Best Single Issue (or One-Shot) - ***Batman/The Spirit #1*** by *Jeph Loeb & Darwyn Cooke* (DC)

•Best Continuing Series - ***All Star Superman,*** by *Grant Morrison & Frank Quitely* (DC)

•Best Limited Series - ***Batman: Year 100,*** by *Paul Pope* (DC)

•Best New Series - ***Criminal,*** by *Ed Brubaker & Sean Phillips* (Marvel/Icon)

•Best Title for a Younger Audience - ***Gumby,*** by *Bob Burden & Rick Geary* (Wildcard)

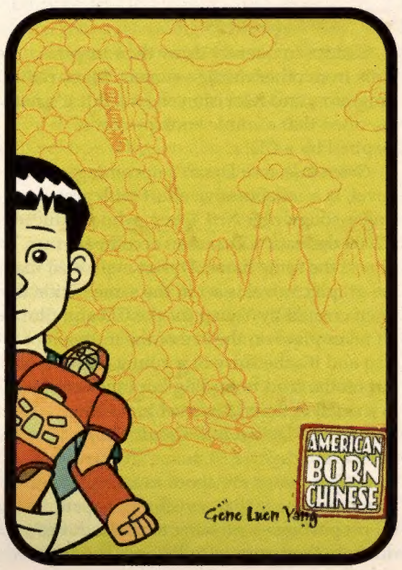
•Best Humor Publication - ***Flaming Carrot Comics,*** by *Bob Burden* (Desperado)

•Best Anthology - ***Fables: 1001 Nights of Snowfall,*** by *Bill Willingham* and various (Vertigo/DC)

•Best Digital Comic - ***Sam and Max,*** by *Steve Purcell*

•Best Reality-Based Work - ***Fun Home,*** by *Alison Bechdel* (Houghton Mifflin)

•Best Graphic Album (New) - ***American Born Chinese,*** by *Gene Luen Yang* (First Second)



•Best Graphic Album (Reprint) - ***Absolute DC: The New Frontier,*** by *Darwyn Cooke* (DC)

•Best Archival Collection/Project (Strips) - ***The Complete Peanuts, 1959-1960, 1961-1962,*** by *Charles Schulz* (Fantagraphics)

Best Archival Collection/Project (Comic Books) - ***Absolute Sandman, vol. 1,*** by *Neil Gaiman* and various (Vertigo/DC)

Best U.S. Edition of International Material - ***The Left Bank Gang,*** by *Jason* (Fantagraphics)

Best U.S. Edition of International Material (Japan) - ***Old Boy,*** by *Garon Tsuchiya & Nobuaki Minegishi* (Dark Horse Manga)

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